

*Basra and the South
Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese*



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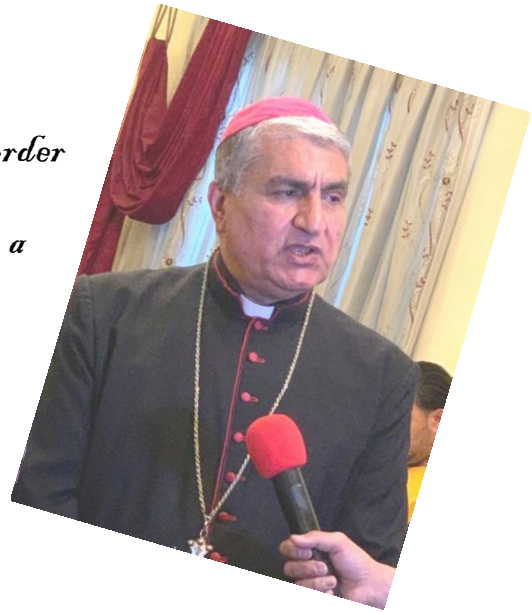
171 The Church, "the pillar and bulwark of the truth", faithfully guards "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints". She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith.[57] As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.

833 The phrase "particular church," which is first of all the diocese (or eparchy), refers to a community of the Christian faithful in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession.[313] These particular Churches "are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them that the one and unique Catholic Church exists." (CCC Rome, 1994)

Basra & the south Chaldean Archdiocese
May 2019

I Dream

I dream at a time where there is an Iraqi order really look for peace between people, create a security space, social justice abundantly; tries to educate her people, take responsibility of reconstruction the country.



I dream at a time where the number of helpful people, who shake hands each other has been increased in order to rebuild the new life.

I dream that we are equal & in a life where no longer persecution because religion or believe.

I dream that the country will rise up again.

+ Habib

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The visiting of HB Mar Louis Sako to the Diocese in 2014

Introduction

I am pleased to present this booklet about the Basra and the south Chaldean Archdiocese. It is an introduction to our apostolic and missionary work. You will find a brief historical summary of the history of the Chaldean church, and then the churches of Basra & Al-Amara, the diocese educational projects and details about the committees: pastoral, cultural, spiritual and financial.

The booklet covers the last five years (2014-2019). And despite the migration of the majority of the families to seek refuge, the laity is working double to make the light of Christianity bright in this area where 99% are Muslims.

Dear reader, remember us in your prayer. We hope that this church will grow with the power of the Holy Spirit and the support of the good will people.

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A Historical Out Line Metropolitan of Basra and the South

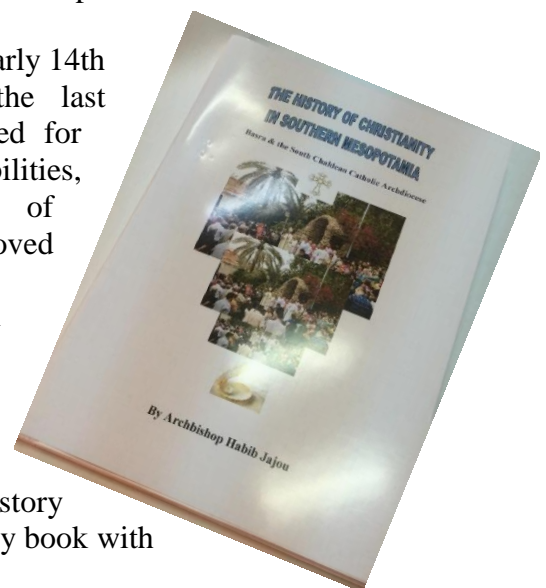
The Metropolitan of Basra and the South (formerly known as the Diocese of *Prath d'Maishan*) regarded as one of the oldest Archbishopric of the Church of the East.

According to historical sources, by the 4th century the Metropolitan of *Prath d'Maishan* was ranked third in the diocesan organisation of the Church of the East. It was one of the sixth largest provinces of the church.¹ The region of the diocese included many small towns such as *Karkha d'Maishan*, *Rima* and *Nahrkor*, situated between Basra and Maisan-present day Amara².

Scores of churches, monasteries and cultural centres were opened between *Jundishapur*, *Ahwaz*, *Prath d'Maishan* and the Gulf for hundreds of years until the arrival of Hulagu, the Mongol king (1258AC). This was achieved because of the spirit of the missionaries who preached of Christianity.

All signs of Christian civilisation were destroyed in the early 14th century; *Abdisho Al-Soubawi* was mentioned as the last Archbishop of Basra in 1316. Christianity disappeared for centuries because of the Mongols attacks, political instabilities, and epidemics that wiped out large population of Mesopotamia until the 16th century. The inhabitants moved away to the North to be sheltered by its mountains.

Christianity returned to Basra as the refugees trickled back to the south in the early parts of the 16th century, thanks to the activities of the missionaries and a reverse migration. It continues today despite the danger of it being extinct. Since the 1980s until now, 90% of its inhabitants have left. For more information about the history of Christianity in southern Mesopotamia, you can read my book with the same title.



Any Future for Christians in Iraq?

¹ The writer did not look for a scientific and historical examination as there are some question marks on the accuracy of dates.

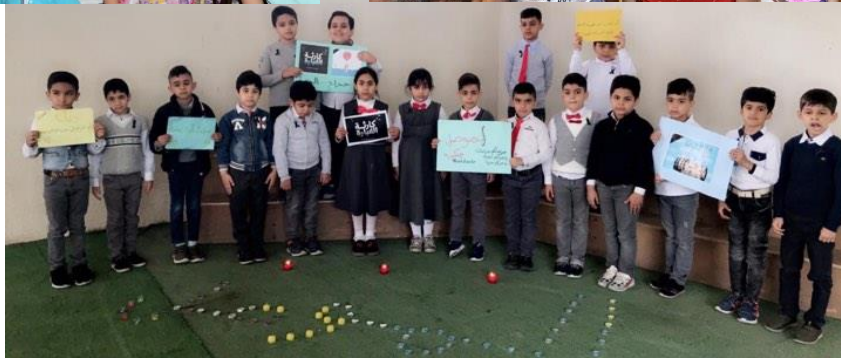
² In Persian it is called *Hamn-ardasheer*.

Christians face a deteriorating situation because the fanaticism and the extremist propaganda against Non-Iraqi Muslims. They have been persecuting and uprooting from their homeland after 2000 years. It is a mind crisis when extremists work to control everything and limiting human rights and freedom.

The dilemma has many reasons: the weak state, the lake of understanding citizenship concepts, and the weak national education. The Iraqi leaders have a significant role to spread culture of the co-existence with non-Muslims. This fearful situation demands:

1. A national law to prevent any more genocides against Iraqi minorities, and to criminalize any individual especially the religious leader who intellectually back terrors.
2. The moderate Muslim religious leaders should be encouraged to speak loudly about peace and stability, as we see how military action could not be able to achieve that. They should adopt a moderate religious discourse to deepen culture of life to seek truth, beauty and love. They are invited to enrich their relations with others through promoting tolerance instead of hatred and revenge. The education in schools should be reformed for the same gaol.
3. Religious constitutions has responsibility to talk about justice, equality and human dignity, they should be encouraged by civil states.
4. A state should stand at the same space with their people, take responsibility of protecting them, and maintain their full rights. It should support religious institutions, civil society and human rights organizations to achieve their humanitarian goals.

Iraqi leaders should work to not only keep and protect the national fabric of different religion, rather consolidate good relations between them; to meet their needs and follow-up human education; to focus on positive coexistence based on divine virtues: charity and mercy. God created man according to His image and likeness, and the human family is one; it has the same source and destiny. There is no magic solution for this tragedy, but state and religious leaders should be part of the solution of this dilemma.





People of Israel, despite were the Church of God, in the Old Testament, they disappeared in the desert. But, Christ established the Holy Church which is full of hope and charity. He proclaimed His mystery as God's plan. So, the Church should read signs of times for the future. This is to unite socially all believers, where Jesus is the source of unity and peace, also all men are called to be the new people of God. (LG 13)

Summary of the Chaldean Churches of Basra

We mentioned that the name of the former diocese *Brath Mishan* was located north of the Qurna district. When Basra was built in the 7th century, several churches were built on the ancient site of Basra near Zubair district (nowadays 12km south of Basra). In addition to the churches, there were monasteries, including *deir al-Dahdar* (now the monastery area is the bank of Shatt al-Arab. It has been converted to a Mosque). The title of the Diocese has been changed to (Basra) during the Abbasid caliphate in the 9th century.

When Basra people moved to the current location in the 15th century, there were no church until the 17th century. They were constructed by French and Portuguese monks in 1625 & in 1787. The first Armenian Church was built in 1736 and was followed by Chaldeans in 1880, the sources said. The number has increased up to 14, which includes the Assyrian, Latin, Syro-Catholic & Orthodox and Evangelical churches. Currently there are five Chaldean churches (3 are closed):

Church of Saint Thomas

Built in 1885, it is one of the oldest Chaldean churches in Basra. Its design incorporates eastern style elements, and primary school was built next to it. Despite being severely damaged by a huge fire in 1983, it continued to serve its members until 2004. Today, it provides shelter for the poor families. In the last 120 years, the church witnessed 1167 burials, 684 marriages and 3501 baptisms.



The Saint Thomas Chaldean Church



The Virgin Mary Chaldean Cathedral/1930



In 1907, work commenced on building a cathedral in Basra (*al- Qishla*) to replace the small church that already existed. The building was drawn up by Italians who were influenced by

Gothic designs³. It was constructed as a Roman Cross and was twined with a church in Rome. The cathedral opened in 1930. It also acted as bishop's headquarters from 1954 to 1971. When it closed down in 1981; the cathedral was converted into a refuge centre for penurious families with the help of Chaldean Association of Mercy⁴. The Chaldean nuns managed the *Al-Fayhaa* School which was built adjacent to the cathedral. Some 3877 children were baptised in this cathedral.

The Church of Saint Joseph

This tiny church was opened in 1951. Today, there is nothing left of this church except its abandoned structure as it was closed down in 1992. The church was cast in the Western Architectural style and it was built so that it could serve the Christians who lived near the port of Basra. Today some low income families live around it. 82 baptisms were conducted in this church.



The Church of St. Pius

This church was built in 1953 in *al-Jumhuriya* district by Bishop Yousif Gougi (see picture) and was named after Pope Pius XII. After 20 years of service, it was abandoned and it remains empty until this day.

The Church of Lady of the Annunciation

This humble church was built in early 1970s due to the efforts of father *Jibrael Gini* and later it became a kindergarten & a primary school.



The Church of Lady of the Annunciation Chaldean Education Centre

³ An European architecture which was very popular in Europe between 1150 and 1400.

⁴ The Chaldean Association of Mercy was established in 1934 and still continues to serve the faithful in the Archbishopric.

The Church of Saint Aphram

The church was built in 1969. Bishop Gibrael Ganni supervised its building. Until 2015, the church witnessed the baptisms of 1660 children, 1334 marriages and 984 funerals, also a catechist centre was build next to the church.



Rare artefacts of the Archbishopric

During 2014, many rare artefacts were gathered, such as books, paintings and some instruments that were used in mass, dating back to the 19th century. These artefacts have a spiritual value and they show the care that our ancestors paid when they exercised their faith.



Al-Amara city

The Church of Mary the Virgin Mother of Sorrows

In Al-Amara city (185km north of Basra), today, there is only one cross standing on the rooftop of the church of Mary the Virgin mother of Sorrows; it is regarded as the oldest surviving Christian monument in the city. It was built in 1880, at *Mahmoudia* neighbourhood. It was renovated in 1995 and 2013. Presently, Jalal Daniel looks after the church affairs and the Christian families.



The Jewish school and the Syro Catholic Church are two old buildings adjacent to it. The Syro Church was built in 1950 and despite its worn out structure, it still provides shelter to poor Christian families. The church was visited by HB Patriarch Louis Sako during February 2014.



the Pastoral Centre



the Residential Department



A Memorial photo after the mass (once a month)

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The Church, "the pillar and bulwark of the truth", faithfully guards "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints". She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith. (CCC. 171/Rome, 1994)

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The Diocese Activities

Almost sixty active laity people helps the clergy to serve the faithful, They work through different committees. The four essential committees are: the Liturgical, the Pastoral, the Cultural, and the Finance one. The first one work to activate the pastoral care and social responsibility for people in Basra and the south, Christian and non-Christian. They continue the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ our Lord. The Second committees organise

celebrating of the Chaldean Catholic liturgical Calendar. The third Committee looks after the Diocese centres: the Kindergarten, the Primary School, the Christian Education Institute, and Catechism. The Forth Committee controls the Diocese property and the finance; the income and the expenses.

Service Committees

Who are they, how has their mission been developing, and what are they facing? They are groups of lay people with priests and nuns who join together to pray and act. They emerged s as a response to new challenges in the society. Although most people have popular devotion; Lay workers are increasing in numbers. The intention is to strengthen the spiritual life and the understanding of the church and its role in society. Their missionary is to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God to build up the community. The Chaldean Patriarch Conference (1995 Baghdad) has affirmed in his first document (Faith and the Laity Mission): 'Laity should engage with the Church's mission.... They have rights and duties... They should be Christ's witnesses in their life as yeast.'⁵

*"The Church . . . will become greater in spiritual riches and gaining the strength of new energies there from, she will look to the future without fear. . . . Our duty is to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, thus pursuing the path which the Church has followed for 20 centuries."*⁶

Celebrating Liturgy

Liturgy is a 'public work' or a 'service in the name of/on behalf of the people' (CCC 1069). The Chaldean liturgy includes the Apostle St Addai and Mari Anaphora, and another two by Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia. The Church has Sacraments Rites and the official prayer for every day. People join the priest and deacons in praying in Chaldean and Arabic languages. The Liturgy is rich in old prayers written by poets and writers attributed to the Eastern Saints, Patriarchs, and Martyrs. All the prayers are chanted by the faithful. In addition to the Eastern Liturgy, people also pray using the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and new popular devotionals approved of by the Catholic Church. Christians celebrate many feasts, some are fixed according to the Chaldean Liturgical calendar, others are movable, and the rest are celebrated according to the Roman Catholic Church Calendar.

In addition to the Lent Season, the Chaldean Church has a special fast for three days. It is the Ninevites Ba'utha. They fast and pray asking for repentance and remembering the story of Jonah as written in the Old Testament book of Jonah.



the Choir & Sub deacons during the mass

⁵ The Chaldean Patriarchal Conference Documents, *Nagm Al-Masriq Journal*, 4 (1998), 12-13.

⁶ "APOSTOLIC LETTER FIDEI EPOSITUM" <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/fideidepositum.htm>



A Prayer Meeting in Basra 2019



Celebrating the Coronation of Mother Mary, every 15th August



Celebrating the Palm Sunday



Celebrating the 1st Holy Communion



Ordaining Hypo-deacons in 2017



Maundy Thursday



The Good Friday

'The acts of faith, hope, and charity enjoined by the first commandment are accomplished in prayer. Lifting up the mind toward God is an expression of our adoration of God: prayer of praise and thanksgiving, intercession and petition. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's commandments. "[We] ought always to pray and not lose heart." (CCC. 2098)



The Holy Hour



the Way of the Cross

‘And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one,’(John 17: 22)

Pastoral Care

The relationship between the shepherd and the parish requires three things at the same time: to meet the minimum physical, psychological and spiritual needs. Sometimes there is a little material help for the members of the Church who are in poverty (40%),⁷ despite they need from us hope and joy through concrete acts of love. Therefore, the shepherd's plan is to visit and accompany them spiritually and encourage the Church groups for simple actions. The priest also has an important role in religious ceremonies when celebrating of the Seven Mysteries of the Church.

The committees with their pastors are concerned with the care of families of low-income Christian (and Muslim) families, and some of Basra's social centres, such as the homes of the elderly or orphans, among others. However, this support is limited and only for those with a family income of less than one million ID per month.

The diocese have in different places in Basra & Al-Amara: tens of small houses, small flats & 9 caravans to serve poor families, displaced and needy one. Also in the Diocese solidarities like: *the Chaldean Mercy Society* (founded in 1937) and the *Good Samaritan Brotherhood*, they hold biannual exhibitions to support families in need.



Supporting people with the drinking water in 2018

⁷ It includes small amounts of money to pay for medicines, surgical costs and to support the payment of renting houses and apartments. It also includes special assistance for pregnant mothers, new married couples in need and returnees from abroad to cover the cost of the aircraft and to provide a support for the student to pay for transportation during the study year.



Helping the displaced families and the poor with food baskets & medicine periodically



Supporting families in Al-Amara city



The Educational & Cultural Projects

The goal of education as a process of facilitating learning is to open up one person to himself, the other, God and to nature together. It aims to strengthen his personality through Christian and humanitarian knowledge, faith and values. He has to learn how to think, discuss, criticize and evaluate. Then he has to transpire and teach others.

‘Culture is every human activity that changes man’s personality for better condition’ Pope Paul VI wrote in *Gaudium et Spes*. Only through culture man comes to a true and full humanity. It has different tools: language, folklore, arts & literature, music, food, and values. It helps mental, emotional, social and literary maturity. Through it the person will not suffice on himself, but, will be helped to discover the truth and humility in its request and away from passion, fanaticism and exaggeration. This is all important to the faithful as he discovers the truth in Christ and the greatness of the divine plan from the days of our Father Abraham to the resurrection of Christ and the transmission of the gospel to the whole world.

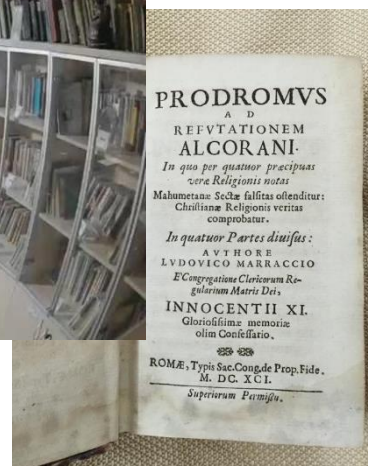
The Diocese education is divided into such stages as kindergarten, primary school, youth and adult programmes.

"The term 'laity' is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World." (CCC.897)



The Diocese Library (5000 Books & Magazines)

An old book was published in 1691



‘And God wants you to do good so that you may silence those fools who ignorantly criticize you. Behave as free people but do not speak of freedom as a license for vice; you are free men and God’s servants. Reverence each person, love your brothers and sisters, fear God and show respect to the emperor’
(1p2: 15-17).



The Catechism



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The Christian Educational Institute

In 2017 HB Mar Leuis Sako visited the Diocese and opened the Christian Educational Institute. Nowadays 31 adults are doing 24 courses for 3 years (360 hours). The Institute is under the umbrella of the Babel College for philosophy and theology. The courses include introduction to: the Biblical studies, the history of the Church, the theology, the pscycology, the sociology, Religions, Ecumination, Pastoral care, Catechism, Christian Art, Fathers of the Church, Spiritual direction, Spirituality, Applied theology, teaching of the Catholic Church.



The second year 2019



The Opining of the Christian Educational Institute in Basra



The graduation of the first year 2018

‘Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural promotion, and formation. This role is increasing, as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influence exercised on public opinion. ‘ ‘The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good.[284] Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity..’(CCC. 2493,2494)

The Our Lady of the Annunciation Nursery and Kindergarten

It was established in 1992, this year more than 160 child are learing for 4 years. The staff teaches them leanguages (Arabic & English), Art, mathematics & music.





Celebrating the graduation 2018-2019

The Chaldean League

The Chaldean League which was established in 2014 is a non-political and non-profit worldwide organization built on philanthropic, ethnic, social and national grounds. As a new entity, it requires at this phase to stand firm and be supported by highly qualified people. It is making an effort to strengthen relations with Christians and other citizens, in addition to serving Chaldeans (as a component of the nation not as a minority).⁸



The Our Lady of the Annunciation Primary School

The school was opened in 2017 by the support of the Fraternity in Iraq solidarity/Paris. It accepted 74 children, and teach them texts according to the programmes of the Ministry of Education in Iraq plus computer & music courses.

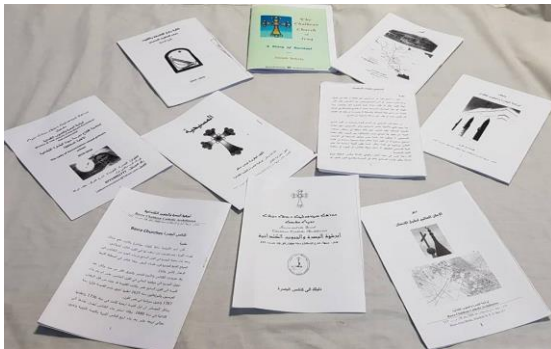


⁸ www.chaldeanleague.org.



In addition to the above activities, the Diocese held different seasons about: the Mesopotamia civilizations, human rights, computer science, and languages, these to improve the people human skills. Moreover, tens of Laity leaders did courses in Baghdad, Arbil, Bearut and Amman. These courses are set by different religious & cultural Institutions and NGOs.

The Diocese Publishing



1. تاريخ المسيحية في جنوب وادي الرافدين (تأليف)
2. تاريخ ابرشية كشكر (محافظة واسط) (تأليف)
3. خدام الكلمة (حياة البطارقة والمطارنة الكلدان منذ سنة 1500م) (تأليف).
4. المدخل الى اللاهوت (ترجمة)
5. خبز لرحلة الحياة (تأملات يومية) (ترجمة)
6. محبة قلم (محاولة شبابية) للشباب حسام كورو
7. تسابيح مشرقية (حسب الليتورجية الكلدانية) (اعداد).

8. The History of Christianity in southern Mesopotamia
9. The Servants of the Word
10. O Creator of Light Tr. By Robert Ewan, London





A Youth meeting at the Chaldean Nun centre



A Book Fairs (bimonthly)

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Educating the Basra New Generation

The Diocese hold many seminars every year about Christianity and the Mesopotamian civilizations for people especially the University & Institutes students. The NGOs in Basra encourage the Church to hold more. Almost 1500 students attend lectures every year. They take with them gifts from the Church like: the Gospel, the Human Right Decliration and many booklets.



Biblical Studies (monthly meetings)



A Lecture at the Basra University/ Collage of Science



A lectures about Christianity at St Aphram Church (left & down)
& at the Southern Technical University(right)







The Finance Committees

The Committees are interested in managing the Church's properties in Basra and Al-Amara. Also they administrate the income & expenses of the Diocese (also the Kindergarten & the Primary school), this plus supporting poor families with finance to pay for: the health care, transportation, renting flats...etc. Another of the diocese's concerns is to take care of reconstruction, to maintain churches, to build new units and to maintain the cemetery.



The Diocese Cemetery



More than 150 families get benefits from the Diocese support, 60% of them are Muslims, they live in small houses belong to the Church. They pay monthly a small amount. Also the Diocese helps patients through paying part of the cost of surgeries and medications. It helps: poor students, the Chaldean Seminary, poor people in Al-Amara & Al-Naseriya, and poor Christians in the Neniveh Plain.



Indexing and photography:

The library's books have been catalogued electronically to facilitate access to sources and references. Most of the Diocese's documents were photographed using electronic the Camrea & the scanner. The goal that is to keep them from damaging. This have been done for some rare books.

Ottoman mortgage Church registration bond (1910)



Solidarity with the Diocese

The Diocese got honors (Shields & thanks-giving letters) from tens of official and non-official institutions (46 honor between 2014 & 2019), below names of the senders where some titles are in Arabic Language:

1. Al-Ferdows Society
2. Al-Lotes Society
3. From Ashoraa Parades.
4. From the office of Muqtada Alsada (the leader of the Sadrist Movement).
5. LLI Living Light international organization
6. Members of the Iraqi Parliament
7. Protection of the Iraq Antiquities Group
8. The Ahl-Albait Charity Cultural Institution
9. The Ajyal theatre & visual arts
10. The Al-Ataba Hashed Alshabi Division
11. The Al-Farahidi Festival for culture
12. The Alghiri Institution for Islamic Education
13. The Al-Hashid Al-Shabi (2)
14. The Al-Nasma Humanitarian Institution
15. The Anti-Corruption commission
16. The Basra Counsel (3)
17. The Basra Human Rights Office
18. The Basra Traffic Directorate with Chamber of Commerce
19. The Basra Tribes Counsel
20. The Central Library of Basra city
21. The Cultural Renaissance Institution
22. The Directorate of Syriac Studies in the Ministry of Education
23. The Directorate of Youth & sport in Basra
24. The Education College in Al-Amara U.
25. The Education College in Basra U.
26. The Hams Alqwarir Festival
27. The heritage of religions Group
28. The High Committee of the Christian Culture in Baghdad
29. The Iraqi Academics Syndicate (Basra Branch)
30. The Kuwaiti Counselate
31. The Library of Basra University
32. The Love & Peace social Institution.
33. The Nasma Humanitarian Institution
34. The Peace Delegates Net in Basra
35. The Russian Counselate
36. The Shirazi She'a Centre
37. The souther Technical University
38. The SWE Development
39. The University of Oil & Gas in Basra
40. The Univesity of Basra/ college of Arts
41. The USA Counselate (2)
42. The Wisdon Centre for the dialogue in Al-Najaf





More Activities



At the Armenian Church



A meeting of the Basra Churches Pastors



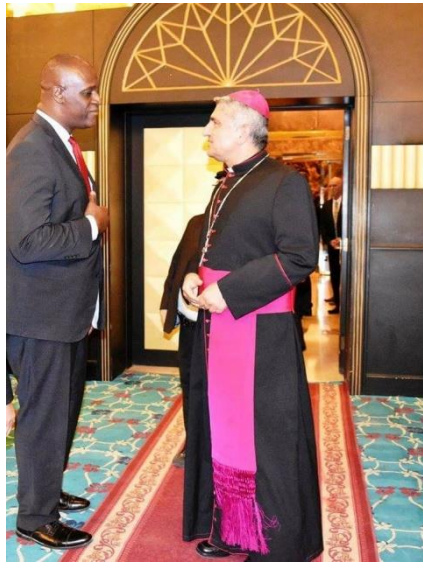
With members of NGOs & solidarities in Basra (1)

(2)



Exhibitions

Welcoming Consuls & NGOs



The USA Consuls



The Turkish Consul



The Iranian Consul



The Egyptian Consul



The Kuwaiti Consuls



The Czech Republic Ambassador



Baroness Nicholson (house of Lords)



The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq-UNAMI representative



The Arabic Gulf Studies Centre



The Iraqi Human Rights representative

With Government & Public Officials



Al-Hashid Al-Shaabi (the Iraqi Public Army) - Governor of the Court of Appeal



the Southern Technical University President of the University of Basra



Attending different occasions



Visiting the Iraqi Army Commander (south of Iraq)



An NGO visiting to the Diocese



Visiting the Basra Police Commander



Meetings with the Mandaen Shaikh in Basra & Al-Amara



Meetings with the Islamic Leaders



Visiting of the Minister of Sciense & Technology (left) & A Shea Leader (right)



Sharing religious occasions



Visiting of the Basra Governor



Visiting of different Basra society groups



Chaldean Mercy Society is supporting Nursing House - Visiting of the tribal Leaders

**Christian Book Fair
for Basra people
twice a year**





The Cultural Season attracts educated Basra people to come to the church



Helping the high school students to concentrate on reading

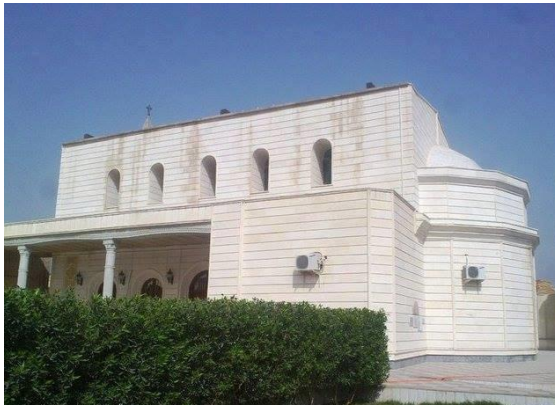


Two Mosques have been built over the remnants of two old monasteries north of Basra



Marshes north of Basra are a good place for tourism

Other Churches in Basra



The Armenian Church



The Syro-Catholic Church

The Syro-Catholic Church: Located in *Abdulla Bin Ali* Street, Ashar. It was built in 1936. Tel No.07705654053

The Armenian Church: Located in the old section of Basra. It was built in 1736. Tel: 07718949683

The Syro-Orthodox Church: Located at the end of *Abdulla bin Ali* Street, Ashar. It was built in 1938. Tel: 07703015732



The Evangelical Church



The Syro-Orthodox Church

The Evangelical Church: It was built in 1998. Located in the Al-Manawy Pasha section. Tel: 07730512223

The St. Therese of the Child Jesus Carmelite Church: It was built in 1987 in Al-Manawy Pasha, 14th July Street/ centre of Basra. Beside the Church the convent of Dominican Sisters of love for the Presentation of the Virgin Saint. They serve hundreds of children in their kindergarten/ Tel: 07703185359



The St. Teresa Latin Church



The Dominican Sisters of the Presentation Kindergarton



The Assyrian Churches

Two Assyrian Churches; (left) St George in *Kut Alhijaj* section, (right) Remnants of the old one in *Al-Seaba* west of Basra. It was built after the first World War. There is also another remnants of the third church (the Virgin Mary) in *Al-Jamhuriya* section/ Basra.



The Endowments of the Christian, Mandaen & Ezedian staff with HB Mar Louis Sako & The Pontifical Ambassador in Basra ----The Advantest Church in *Al-Ashar*



The Shi'a Chaldean in *Al-Naseriya* City

Prilgrimage to Ur the Chaldean Abraham in the Bible

Iraqi Churches usually hold prilgrimage to UR every year for prayer and turism purposes.



Map of southern Iraq

UR was a small city within a group of cities built to mark the emergence of civilization as a result of the transition from nomadic life to urbanization. Civilization was rich agriculturally, industrially, commercially and at all levels. The Epic of Kalkamsh in the middle of the third millennium 2560 BC is an example confirmed this. It emphasized the need for civil urbanization in accordance with the laws of life in cities at that time.

Ur was initially Sumerian, and Sumerian civilization began to rise strongly around 2850 BC. Historically, the Ruins of Ur are located in a slightly elevated area called *Tal al-Muqair*, believed to have been built on the banks of the Gulf near the city of Aredo and now near *Al-Nasiriyah*, about 200 kilometers north west of Basra & 375 km south west of Baghdad in a desert area near the Euphrates River. It is famous for its Zagorate where people used to celebrate the worship of the goddess Moon; the court building, the palace of king Orenmo's Son and many royal tombs built of dry clay blocks, especially the Tomb of Shebaad.

Abraham is mentioned different times in the Bible, the first one was when God called him (in the Book of Genesis). In the beginning his name was Abram, then it has been changed to Abraham which means: Father of many. Below are some texts regarding that:

‘1The LORD said to Abram: Go forth from your land, your relatives, and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will find blessing in you.

4 Abram went as the LORD directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5 Abram took his wife Sarai, his brother’s son Lot, all the possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land as far as the sacred place at Shechem, by the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

7The LORD appeared to Abram and said: To your descendants I will give this land. So Abram built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. **8**From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel, pitching his tent with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. He built an altar there to the LORD and invoked the LORD by name. **9**Then Abram journeyed on by stages to the Negeb.’ (Gn. 12)

The Book refers to the descendants of Terah:

‘These are the descendants of Terah. Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran begot Lot. **28**Haran died before Terah his father, in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. **29**Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai,* and the name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah, daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. **30**Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to go to the land of Canaan. But when they reached Haran, they settled there. **32**The lifetime of Terah was two hundred and five years; then Terah died in Haran.’(Gn.11)

Then, the Book mention the covenant between God and Abram:

1When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said: I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. **2**Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly.

3Abram fell face down and God said to him: **4**For my part, here is my covenant with you: you are to become the father of a multitude of nations. **5**No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I am making you the father of a multitude of nations. **6**I will make you exceedingly fertile; I will make nations of you; kings will stem from you. **7**I will maintain my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. **8**I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now residing as aliens, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God. (Gn., 17)

In the New Testament, Abraham has been mentioned by the Virgin Mary and Zechariah:

‘46 And Mary said: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;

47my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

48For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

49The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

50His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.

51He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

52He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.

53The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

54He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy,

55according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

‘67Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:
 68 “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
 for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.
 69 He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his
 servant,
 70even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:
 71salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,
 72to show mercy to our fathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant
 73and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,
 and to grant us that,
 74rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him 75in
 holiness and righteousness before him all our days.’ (Lk 1)



Pilgrims to UR



Visiting Ur and Marches

The Lord Jesus Christ have mentioned Abraham in different occasions: in the Gospel according to Mathew He said: 3 ‘ And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.’ In Chap. 8 He said ‘ I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven, 12but the children of the kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.” In another occasion (Mat 22) He said ‘ And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 32 ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.’

In the Gospel according to Luke Chap 16, Jesus mentioned Abraham in His parable about the rich man, he said:

19“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. **20**And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, **21**who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. **22**When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, **23**and from the netherworld,* where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. **24**And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ **25**Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. **26**Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ **27**He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, **28**for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ **29**But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ **30** He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’” (Lk 16)



‘9 Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up.10 So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.’
Galatians 6



Ministry of Laity Believers

877 Likewise, it belongs to the sacramental nature of ecclesial ministry that it have a collegial character. In fact, from the beginning of his ministry, the Lord Jesus instituted the Twelve as "the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy." Chosen together, they were also sent out together, and their fraternal unity would be at the service of the fraternal communion of all the faithful: they would reflect and witness to the communion of the divine persons. For this reason every bishop exercises his ministry from within the episcopal college, in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and head of the college. So also priests exercise their ministry from within the presbyterium of the diocese, under the direction of their bishop.

898 "By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will.... It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated that these may always be effected and grow according to Christ and maybe to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer."

899 The initiative of laity Christians is necessary especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means for permeating social, political, and economic realities with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. This initiative is a normal element of the life of the Church:

Laity believers are in the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him. They are the Church. Catechism of the Catholic Church (Rome, 1994)

‘Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue as well as encouraging cultural diversity is, in fact, a sign of a mature understanding of the modern social life, and ultimately to create a peaceful and stable society. The dialogue, the theme of this conference, can be effective in combating extremism, and in proclaiming human values by utilising the common elements between religions and cultures. For instance, by analysing old cultures, we realise that people were, simply looking for answers for the true meaning of life. Similarly, Religion: cosmic, meta-cosmic can do more by seeking life’s ultimate purposes/goals.’

‘Given that the world is facing today a growth in the number of fanatical groups, it is important for each country concerned to establish a formal body to oversee and organise dialogue-related projects and set goals for their success. The implication of such practical steps will create new ways for a human family to respect and accept diversities in society. It will also eliminate the grounds for resorting to violence, extremisms and terrorism. In short, a planned and organised dialogue project can contribute tremendously to get people to share a culture of life, seek truth, work for justice and peace and, above all, explore the beauty of the world we live in.’ AB Habib Jajou Zagreb in Dec 7-8 2017

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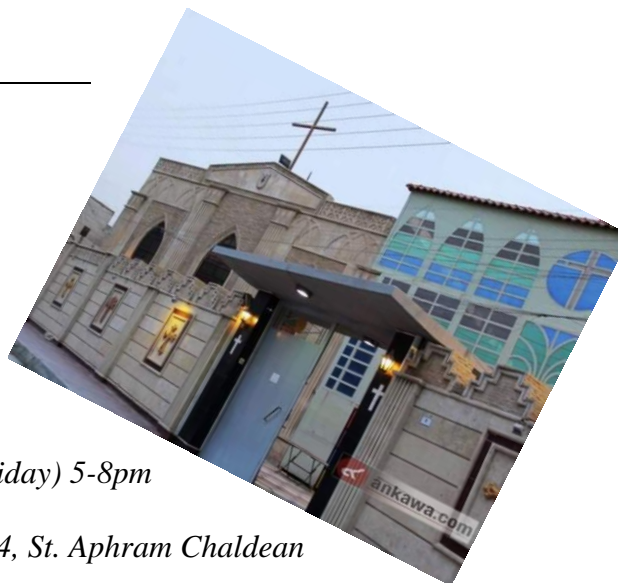
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"In Iraq Christians are dying, the Church is disappearing under continued persecution, threats and violence [are] carried out by extremists who are leaving us no choice: conversion or exile." From HB the Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako interview to the AsiaNews in 2016

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Archbishop Habib Jajou was ordained an Archbishop in 2014. He has a master's degree in Geophysics in 1989 and a master's degree in Applied Theology in 2014. Also he has five Diplomas in Journalism, English Language and Catechism of the Catholic Church between 2006 and 2011. He is an author of tens of books and numerous articles. He is a member & instructor in the Babylon College for Philosophy and Theology. He is currently a member of the editorial team of *Nagim al- Masriq* magazine in Baghdad.